

Wisconsin Black Bear Harvest Report 2003

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Abstract

Wisconsin bear hunters killed 2,905 black bears during the 2003 season. This was 18% higher than the 2002 kill of 2,471 bear. The 2003 kill was comprised of 56% males, and 44% females. The three leading counties of kill were Bayfield, Price, and Douglas.

Background

Wisconsin requires non-Chippewa hunters to obtain a kill permit. The state was divided into four Bear Management Zones (BMZ, Fig. 1) in 2003, and hunters were required to apply for a permit within one of those zones. Kill permits were distributed through a preference point system giving unsuccessful applicants who applied but did not receive a permit in previous years the first chance to receive a kill permit the following year. Each kill permit allowed the taking of one adult bear not accompanied by a cub or cubs in the specified zone. A permit to pursue bear was available to all unsuccessful kill permit applicants who requested it; however this permit did not allow the killing of a bear.

Wisconsin's bear season has opened on the first Wednesday after Labor day since the 2000 season. The 2003 bear season ran from 3 September through 7 October (35 Days). In the northern 1/3rd of the state (BMZ A1, A, and B), hunting with the use of dogs was allowed during 3 – 30 September while the use of bait was allowed 10 September-7 October. Hunters in the southern 2/3rds of the state (BMZ C), could hunt the entire 35-day season but could not use dogs. Hunters using neither dogs nor bait could hunt during the entire 35-day season statewide.

Methods

Wisconsin requires non-Chippewa bear hunters to register all bear at a designated WDNR registration station. An upper first premolar is collected at the time of registration for age analysis. Data on bear harvested by Chippewa tribal members on ceded lands were obtained from the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission (GLIFWC). All kill data is entered into the DNR-UNIX computer by district personnel and summarized using the Statistical Analysis System (SAS).

Results

A total of 56,944 people applied for 4,710 Black Bear Kill Permits in 2003. The number of applicants increased by 4% and the number of permits decreased by 6% between 2002 and 2003 (Tables 1 and 10). All of the 4,710 permits available were issued to hunters prior to the season.

During the 2003 season, 4,710 hunters killed 2,905 black bears (62% success rate), compared to 2,471 taken in 2002. Males comprised 56% (1,613), females 44% (1,288)

of the harvest (Table 2, Fig. 2). The sex was not reported for 4 (0.1%) of the bears killed.

The Northern Region had the highest bear kill (2,482) followed by Northeastern (253), and West Central (170) Regions (Table 2). Most bears were shot in Zone A1 (1,075) followed by Zones A (983), B (476), and C (371) (Table 3 and Figure 1). The five leading counties of kill were Bayfield (359), Price (231), Douglas (227), Sawyer (213), and Rusk (189) (Table 4, Fig. 3). Black bear kill by deer management unit can be found in Table 5 and Figure 4. A significant number of hunters reported multiple sightings of bears, and several large bear of over 500 pounds were killed.

The number of bear taken over bait alone (1,758; Table 6) was greater than the number shot over dogs (1,076; includes bear shot over dogs and bait). Fifteen bear were taken without the use of dogs or bait. Gun hunters took a total of 2,363 bear, whereas archers killed 475; 11 bear were killed with unreported weapon type (Table 6). Table 7 and Figure 5 summarize the historical Wisconsin black bear kill from 1957 to 2003.

Chippewa hunters killed 56 bear in 2003 (Tables 8 and 9); this was more than the 16 killed in 2002. More information on the Chippewa bear kill can be obtained by contacting the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission (GLIFWC), P.O. Box 9, Odanah, WI 54861.

A total of 1,339 black bear complaints were filed from April-October 2003. This was up 16% from the number of complaints (1,151) filed in 2002. As a result, 559 bear were captured and relocated; 68 of those were ear-tagged for monitoring.

One nuisance bear kill permit was issued during the fall of 2003, no bear were killed under this permit. No nuisance permits were issued in 2002.

Weather conditions were excellent (cool, dry, and calm) for most of the 2003 bear season, with bear continuing to visit bait stations frequently throughout the season. As a result, the 2003 bear kill of 2,905 was 22% above the WDNR harvest goal of 2,380 bears. Weather conditions were good during the season. WDNR law enforcement personnel reported very few complaints on hunter behavior or illegal activities.

WDNR established a harvest goal of 2,500 bears for the 2004 season. A total of 4,740 Black Bear harvest permits will be available to hunters to achieve this goal.

Table 1. *Harvest goal, number of permits issued, bear kill and percent success, by zone for the 2003 black bear season.*

Zone	Harvest Goal	Permits Issued	Black Bear Kill	Permit Success
A1	1,000	1,570	1,075	68%
A	700	1,760	983	56%
B	380	600	476	79%
C	300	780	371	48%
Total	2,380	4,710	2,905	62%

Table 2. *Black bear kill by WDNR region, 2003.*

Region	Males	Females	Unreported	Total
Northeastern	133	120	0	253
Northern	1,381	1,097	4	2,482
West Central	99	71	0	170
Total	1,613	1,288	4	2,905

Table 3. *Black bear kill by zone, 2003.*

Zone	Males	Females	Unreported	Total
A1	600	473	2	1,075
A	554	429	0	983
B	243	231	2	476
C	216	155	0	371
Total	1,613	1,288	4	2,905

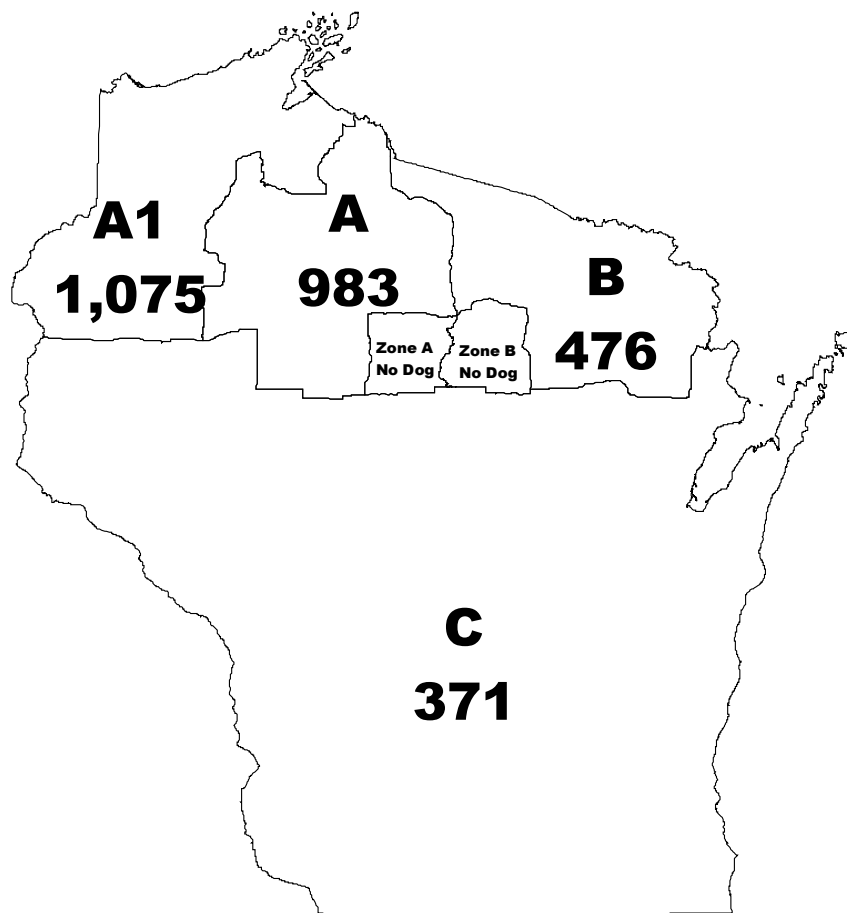


Figure 1. *The 2003 black bear kill by zone.*

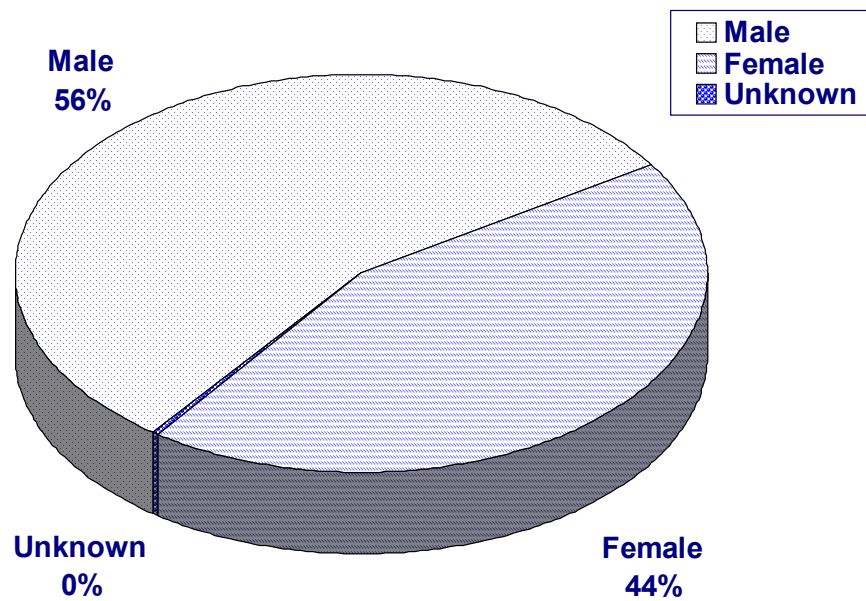


Figure 2. *The 2003 black bear harvest by sex.*

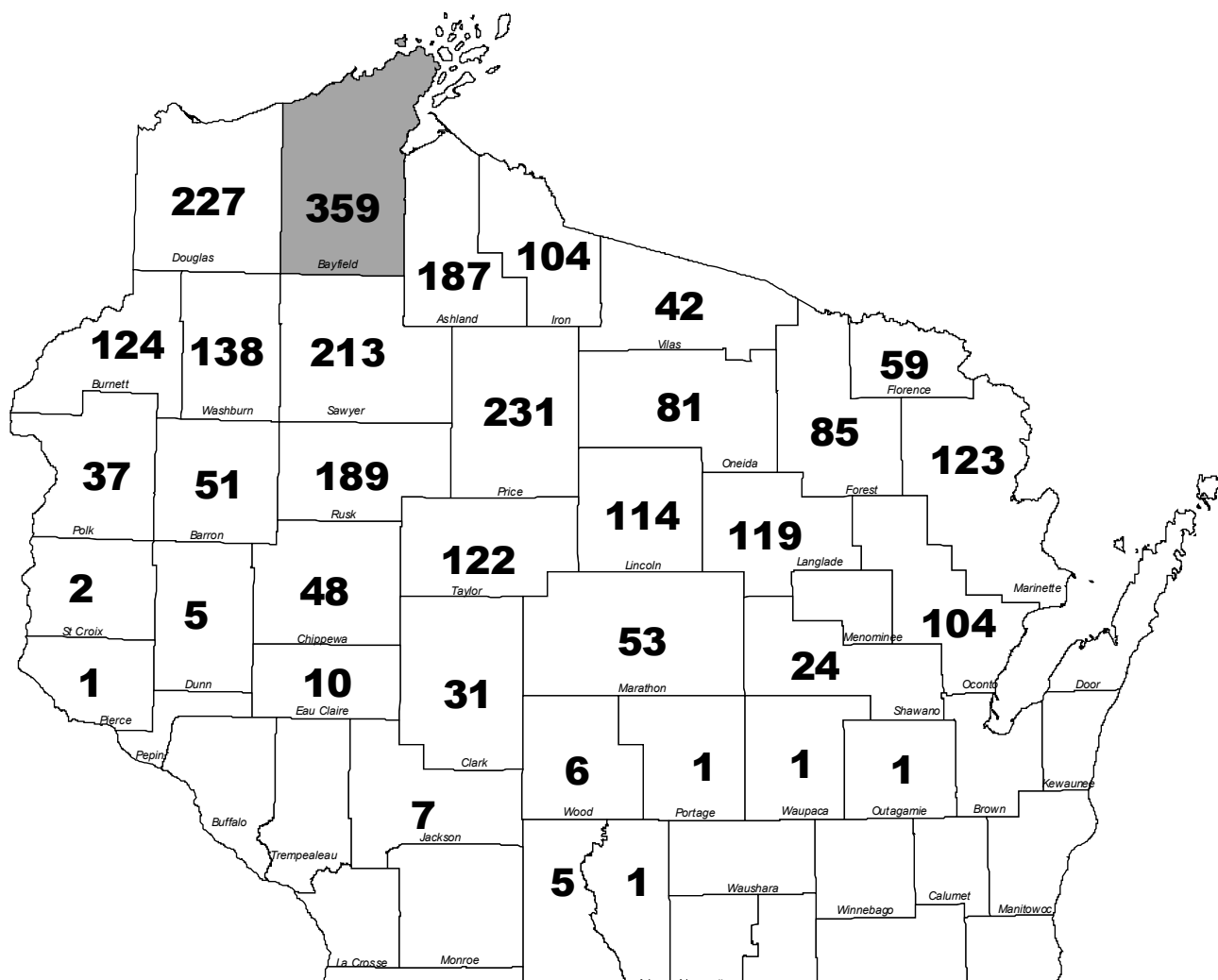


Figure 3. The 2003 black bear kill by county (Shaded county is county of highest harvest).

Table 4. The 2003 black bear kill by county and sex.

County	Males	Females	Un-reported	Total
Adams	1	0	0	1
Ashland	104	83	0	187
Barron	34	17	0	51
Bayfield	198	159	2	359
Burnett	74	50	0	124
Chippewa	23	25	0	48
Clark	15	16	0	31
Douglas	122	105	0	227
Dunn	5	0	0	5
Eau Claire	6	4	0	10
Florence	26	33	0	59
Forest	41	43	1	85
Iron	69	34	1	104
Jackson	3	4	0	7
Juneau	4	1	0	5
Langlade	68	51	0	119
Lincoln	60	54	0	114
Marathon	35	18	0	53
Marinette	68	55	0	123
Oconto	49	55	0	104
Oneida	58	23	0	81
Outagamie	1	0	0	1
Pierce	1	0	0	1
Polk	16	21	0	37
Portage	0	1	0	1
Price	134	97	0	231
Rusk	104	85	0	189
St. Croix	2	0	0	2
Sawyer	100	113	0	213
Shawano	15	9	0	24
Taylor	78	44	0	122
Vilas	17	25	0	42

County	Males	Females	Un- reported	Total
Washburn	78	60	0	138
Waupaca	0	1	0	1
Wood	4	2	0	6
Total	1,613	1,288	4	2,905

Table 5. *The 2003 black bear kill by deer management unit and sex.*

Deer Unit	Males	Females	Un-reported	Total	Deer Unit	Males	Females	Un-reported	Total
01	11	8	0	19	35	6	13	0	19
01M	0	1	0	1	36	7	4	0	11
02	46	50	0	96	37	9	5	0	14
03	96	69	1	166	38	21	8	1	30
04	26	25	0	51	39	21	13	0	34
05	36	23	1	60	40	16	21	0	37
06	73	52	0	125	41	5	3	0	8
07	20	14	0	34	42	34	25	0	59
08	61	36	0	97	43	32	20	0	52
09	58	53	0	111	44	22	35	0	57
10	37	33	0	70	45	29	39	0	68
11	30	16	0	46	46	26	15	0	41
12	34	28	0	62	47	11	7	0	18
13	41	58	0	99	49A	13	17	0	30
14	26	24	0	50	49B	11	6	0	17
15	25	23	0	48	50	22	22	0	44
16	8	6	0	14	51A	17	8	0	25
17	13	17	0	30	51B	30	22	0	52
18	35	36	0	71	52	14	19	0	33
19	63	52	0	115	53	4	1	0	5
20	47	36	0	83	55	4	5	0	9
21	2	2	0	4	56	3	1	0	4
22	24	12	0	36	57	5	0	0	5
22A	5	1	0	6	57A	3	3	0	6
23	40	27	0	67	57B	2	1	0	3
24	28	20	0	48	58	14	14	0	28
25	61	42	0	103	59A	12	12	0	24
26	44	24	0	68	59B	2	1	0	3
27	10	6	0	16	60B	1	0	0	1
28	64	42	0	106	62A	5	4	0	9
29A	19	7	0	26	62B	3	3	0	6
29B	7	6	0	13	63A	1	0	0	1
30	20	16	0	36	63B	2	0	0	2
31	33	18	0	51	78	2	7	0	9
32	52	42	0	94	Total	1,613	1,288	4	2,905
33	7	4	0	11					
34	2	5	1	8					

Table 6. *The 2003 black bear kill by hunting method and weapon type (does not include Chippewa harvest of 56 bear).*

Method	Weapon			Total
	Bow	Gun	Unreported	
Dogs	25	590	1	616
Bait	428	1,323	7	1,758
Dogs and Bait	20	437	3	460
None	2	13	0	15

Total	475	2,363	11	2,849
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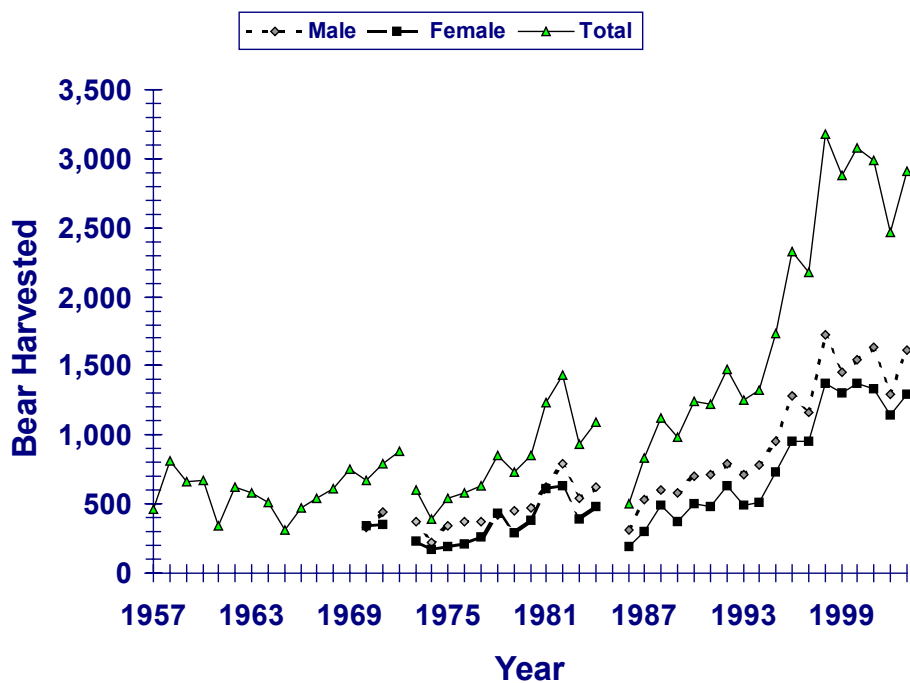


Figure 5. Black bear kill, 1957-2003.

Table 7. Black bear kill by sex, 1957-2003.

Year	Male	Female	Unk	Total	Year	Male	Female	Unk	Total
1957	---	---		460	1981	624	610		1,234
1958	---	---		811	1982	797	636		1,433
1959	---	---		665	1983	539	395		934
1960	---	---		675	1984	617	480		1,097
1961	---	---		337	1985	No Season			
1962	---	---		617	1986	308	195		503
1963	---	---		579	1987	533	304		837
1964	---	---		511	1988	601	494	30	1,125
1965	---	---		308	1989	584	375	19	978
1966	---	---		475	1990	705	501	41	1,247
1967	---	---		541	1991	715	480	24	1,219
1968	---	---		613	1992	789	631	54	1,474
1969	---	---		752	1993	715	494	49	1,258
1970	331	341		672	1994	781	513	34	1,328
1971	444	347		791	1995	953	735	49	1,737
1972	---	---		878	1996	1,288	955	82	2,325
1973	376	230		606	1997	1,165	950	63	2,178
1974	224	166		390	1998	1,727	1,378	79	3,184
1975	344	195		539	1999	1,456	1,301	124	2,881
1976	373	206		579	2000	1,543	1,376	156	3,075
1977	375	256		631	2001	1,632	1,336	18	2,986
1978	426	436	10	872	2002	1,290	1,143	38	2,471
1979	449	288		737	2003	1,613	1,288	4	2,905
1980	469	386		855					

Table 8. *The 2003 Chippewa black bear kill by deer management unit and sex¹.*

Deer Unit	Males	Females	Total
01	2	0	2
02	2	1	3
03	7	1	8
04	0	1	1
05	1	0	1
06	2	0	2
08	1	1	2
09	1	0	1
10	1	1	2
11	4	4	8
12	3	2	5
13	0	2	2
28	2	0	2
30	0	3	3
31	1	0	1
37	0	1	1
38	1	1	2
39	0	2	2
40	1	0	1
43	2	0	2
44	2	0	2
45	1	0	1
46	1	0	1
49A	0	1	1
Total	35	21	56

¹ These data are included in the statewide totals.

Table 9. *The 2003 Chippewa black bear kill by county and sex¹.*

County	Males	Females	Totals
Ashland	2	0	2
Bayfield	9	2	11
Burnett	6	6	12
Douglas	4	1	5
Forest	6	3	9
Iron	2	0	2
Marathon	1	0	1
Oconto	0	1	1
Oneida	2	1	3
Price	0	3	3
Sawyer	0	2	2
Washburn	3	2	5
Totals	35	21	56

¹ These data are included in the statewide totals.

Table 10. *The number of black bear harvest permits issued and the number of applicants, 1974-2004.*

Year	Residents	Non-residents	No. Permits Issued	No. of Applicants
1974	3,459		3,459	3,459
1975	4,116		4,116	4,116
1976	4,899		4,899	4,899
1977	5,025		5,025	5,025
1978	6,283		6,283	6,283
1979	5,612	179	5,791	5,791
1980	6,352	171	6,523	6,523
1981	7,247	241	7,488	7,488
1982	8,142	224	8,366	8,366
1983	7,077	218	7,295	7,295
1984	6,439	320	6,759	6,759
1985	Season		Closed	
1986			840	8,289
1987			1,730	10,203
1988			1,663	10,208
1989			2,020	13,734
1990			2,825	15,988
1991			2,560	17,668
1992			2,620	19,415
1993			2,110	22,555
1994			2,175	25,799
1995			2,710	30,086
1996			4,570	35,356
1997			4,700	41,969
1998			5,860	44,928
1999			6,014	50,938
2000			6,598	50,601
2001			5,681	53,508
2002			4,985	54,879
2003			4,710	56,944
2004			4,740	≈ 61,700